seen anything so odd. Verses are written in capital letters lengthwise in the wood, such as these charming ones:

A squirrel had a rose
in his mouth; an ass
called him madS

And these that he used to write at the top of his letters:

A bee sleeps
In the briars of my heart*

Touggourt, 7 April

An Arab well-maker is being decorated today.

Before the drilling companies and artesian wells, the Arabs had well-makers. The artesian layer is sometimes found as deep as seventy-five or even eighty-five yards under the surface. And men go down there.

They have been trained in childhood for this painful trade, and yet many lose their lives. There are three layers of earth and two layers of water — the first stagnant and the second seepage that wells up — to go through before reaching the artesian layer. Then the water often gushes forth clear and plentiful, but almost always laden with sodium and magnesium. The effort put forth by those diving well-makers to work under the water is incredible; this one was one of the bravest, it appears. They have to build a watertight well or passageway in the middle of the water, in which to work and dig deeper. And they have to do this twice over, through the two liquid layers, laying a channel for the clear water, which must rise through the stagnant water without coming into contact with it.

This very day, in one of those rectangular wells formed of the trunks of palm trees, we saw a man go down, hanging from a rope, to a depth of sixty-five yards to repair some damage.

That is why the Arab well-maker was decorated; this evening he went mad.

The layer of stagnant water at Touggourt is almost on the surface. Instead of the beautiful running waters of Chetma or the moving canals of Biskra, here there are stagnating, stinking ditches full of filthy weeds. Yet there is also a river running through the oasis, nicely divided for the sake of the palms. At the bottom, amid the weeds, water serpents slither.

Un ecureuil avait une rose & la bouche, un dne cceur.
le traita de fou.

* Une abeitte sommeille
Aux bruy&res de mon